OSTRANDER·MIEHM·KESEL
SUICIDE SQUAD
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE FIRST TEAM'S IN-- EVERYTHING'S GOING AS PLANNED!
"SEA OF TROUBLES"

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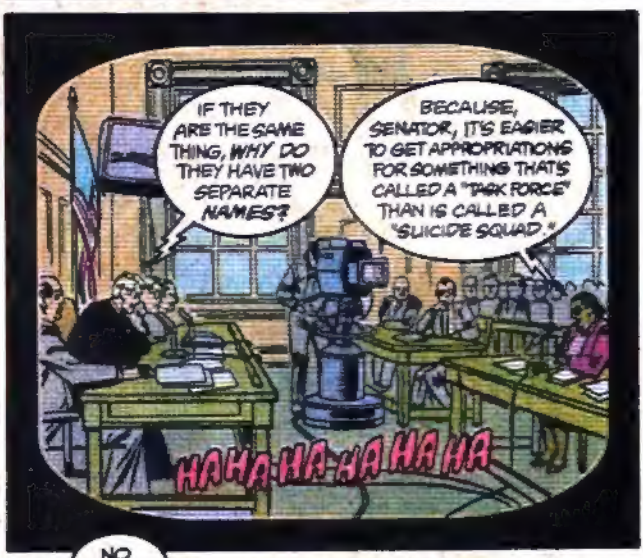
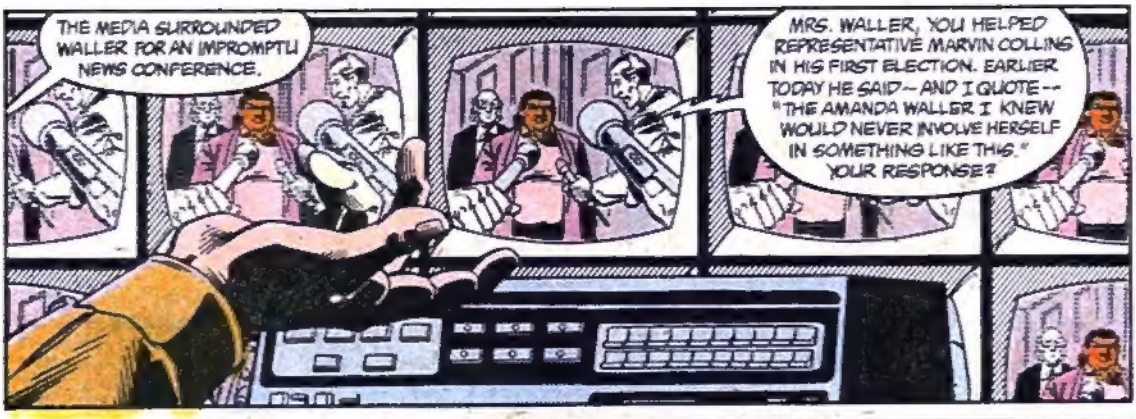
THAT'S THAT SENATOR EDEN GUY, AIN'T IT? HEAD OF THE COMMITTEE? YOU ASK ME, HE'S TRYING TO USE THESE HEARINGS TO GET HIM UP FOR A RUN AT THE WHITE HOUSE IN '92.
HE'S A POLITICIAN. WHAT ELSE DO YOU EXPECT?
MRS. WALLER, ACCORDING TO DOCUMENTS WE'VE RECEIVED, YOU ARE HEAD OF BOTH TASK FORCE X AND THE SO-CALLED SUICIDE SQUAD, IS THAT CORRECT?
YES.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TASK FORCE X AND THE SUICIDE SQUAD?
NONE, SENATOR. THEY ARE ONE AND THE SAME.


IF THEY ARE THE SAME THING, WHY DO THEY HAVE TWO SEPARATE NAMES?
BECAUSE, SENATOR, IT'S EASIER TO GET APPROPRIATIONS FOR SOMETHING THAT'S CALLED A "TASK FORCE" THAN IS CALLED A "SUICIDE SQUAD."
HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA

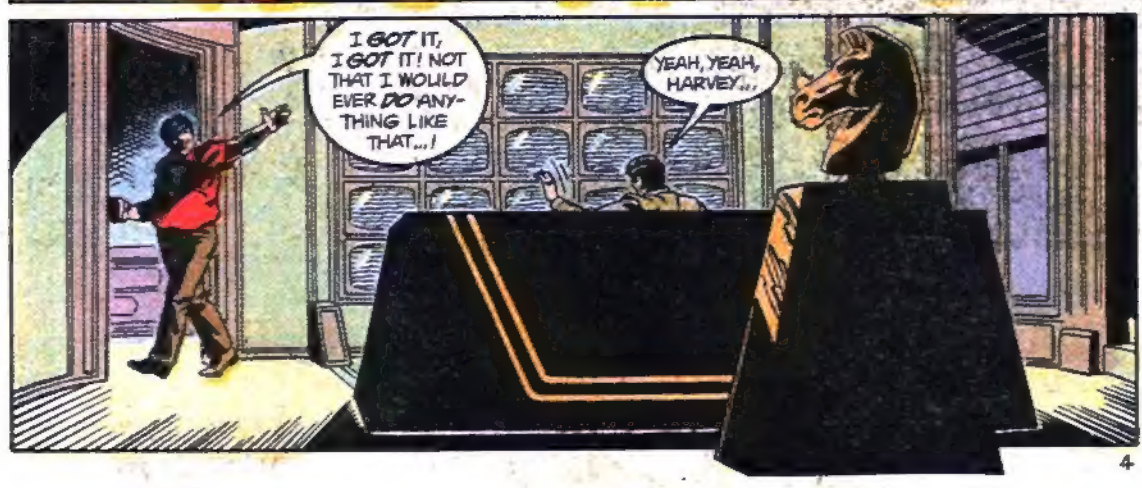
NO DOUBT.
BUT THE ORGANIZATIONAL SCHEMA THAT THE LATE MR. TOLLIVER WROTE DOWN INDICATED THAT OTHER COVERT GOVERNMENTAL GROUPS COULD ALSO BE PLACED UNDER THE TASK FORCE X UMBRELLA. ARE THERE?

THE LATE MR. TOLLIVER SHOWED NONE ON HIS CHART.
TO HIS KNOWLEDGE.
LET ME PUT IT TO YOU THIS WAY, MRS. WALLER. ARE THERE ANY SUCH GROUPS UNDER THE TASK FORCE X BANNER OF WHICH MR. TOLLIVER WAS NOT AWARE?
NO.
WE WERE LUCKY. I WAS SURE HE HAD INSIDE DOPE ABOUT US AT THAT POINT. I THOUGHT THEY WERE GOING TO BLOW OUR LID AS WELL.
YEAH. WELL, IF WE EVER DO GO PUBLIC, THE WALL GETS INDICTED FOR PERJURY.
MAAAN, I'D LIKE TO SEE 'EM TRY TO PUT THE WALL IN JAIL! I'D LIKE TO SEE THE JAIL THAT COULD HOLD HER!
THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE INTERESTING THAT HAPPENED DURING A RECESS. TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.
click
whirrrrrrr


THE MEDIA SURROUNDED WALLER FOR AN IMPROMPTU NEWS CONFERENCE.
MRS. WALLER, YOU HELPED REPRESENTATIVE MARVIN COLLINS IN HIS FIRST ELECTION. EARLIER TODAY HE SAID -- AND I QUOTE -- "THE AMANDA WALLER I KNEW WOULD NEVER INVOLVE HERSELF IN SOMETHING LIKE THIS." YOUR RESPONSE?

EITHER MARVIN NEVER REALLY KNEW ME OR I'M NOT REALLY AMANDA WALLER.
GIVE 'ER THIS -- THE WALL KNOWS HOW TO MANIPULATE THE MEDIA. HOW SHE DOIN' IN THE POLLS?
SHE'S GAINING. THE SQUAD'S ACTIONS DURING THE INVASION HELPED PULL SOME SUPPORT. SHE'S GOT 'EM ON ANOTHER MISSION WHICH -- IF IT WORKS -- SHOULD HELP 'EM EVEN MORE.

WISH WE COULD DO SOMETHIN' T' HELP...
FORGET IT. PART OF THE PURPOSE OF THE WALL'S PERFORMANCE -- TO KEEP US SECRET. WE DON'T GET NEAR THIS AND NEITHER DO ANY OF OUR FRIENDS -- GOT IT, HARVEY?


I GOT IT, I GOT IT! NOT THAT I WOULD EVER DO ANY-THING LIKE THAT...!
YEAH, YEAH, HARVEY...

REWIND
MODE
PLAY
REWIND
...OR I'M NOT REALLY AMANDA WALLER.
HARAR, OGADEN. PRESIDENTIAL PALACE OF GENERAL HAILE SELAISSE FRELIMO.
DAMN IT, T'KAK! THANKS TO THE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES BY THE AMERICAN RAYMOND,* THE NUN IS HAILED AS A SAINT WORLDWIDE!
YOUR MEN SHOULD HAVE KILLED HER IN THE REBEL CAMP OR SET HER FREE! WHY DID THEY BRING HER TO YOUR BASE?
NOW WE HAVE A PROBLEM!
*ED RAYMOND, AS SEEN IN FIRESTORM #77-79. --JOHN (I WRITE THAT TOO) O.
WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY, BUT THE BULLETS THAT KILL HER MUST NOT BE SEEN TO COME FROM OUR GUNS--AS WOULD HAVE BEEN THE CASE IF SHE WERE FOUND DEAD AMIDST REBELS WE HAD KILLED.
IF THINGS BECOME TROUBLESOME, WE SIMPLY PUT A BULLET IN THE BACK OF HER HEAD AND BURY HER IN AN UNMARKED GRAVE.
SHE IS NEVER SEEN AGAIN.

ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, FRELIMO, THE NUN WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO CRITICIZE US—AS YOU HAVE ALLOWED HER TO DO.
WARY, COLONEL! I AM STILL YOUR GENERAL AND THE HEAD OF THE REVOLUTION! YOU WILL TAKE NO ACTIONS REGARDING SISTER MARTINON WITHOUT ORDERS FROM ME!
THE ARMY IS THE REVOLUTION, MY "GENERAL"—AND I NOW HEAD THE ARMY.
COLONEL T'KAKI MEANS TO STEAL YOUR PLACE, MY GENERAL. HE IS A DANGEROUS MAN.
AND, AT THE MOMENT, ALSO A POPULAR ONE WITH THE ARMY. HE IS ALSO ARROGANT AND POLITICALLY NAIVE.
I—I AM A PATIENT MAN. T'KAKI WILL MAKE A MISTAKE—AND THEN I WILL CRUSH HIM.
OUTSIDE MUSTAHIL ARMY BASE, OGADEN.
T-T-T-TO HELL WITH THE F-F-FREAKING NUN! I'M F-F-F-FREEZING!
EENSY TEENSY SPIDER WENT UP THE FRONT OF THE WATERSPOUT...!
THIS? COLD? AH, THIS IS NOTHIN', DOCTOR. I REMEMBER OUR MISSION UP TO RUSSIA—NOW THAT WAS COLD.
STOP IT! YOU PIG! ~GIGGLE!~
6

ACCORDING TO THE SURVIVOR OF THAT SQUAD WE AMBUSHED, THAT'S WHERE SISTER MARTINON'S BEING HELD.
I'VE CIRCLED THE PERIMETER IN MY SHADOWFORM, BEN. I CAN'T SLIP IN. IT'S TOO WELL LIT UP. WHAT DO WE DO?

WE WAIT. WE WATCH. WE STAY READY.
IF ANY PATROLS COME OUT, EVE CAN HIDE US IN A CLOUD OF SHADOW. WE HAVE OVER EIGHT HOURS UNTIL DAWN. LET'S SEE WHAT FORTUNE BRINGS US.

SO, AFTER LEAVING CADRE, YOU CONTINUED YOUR SPIRITUAL QUEST, YOUR SEARCH FOR GOD.

AND ONE DAY I ATTENDED A CHURCH SERVICE PERFORMED BY THE REVEREND FLINT YUMA. AND THAT'S WHEN I HAD MY VISION, YSEE, AND I WAS BORN AGAIN, I SURELY WAS.

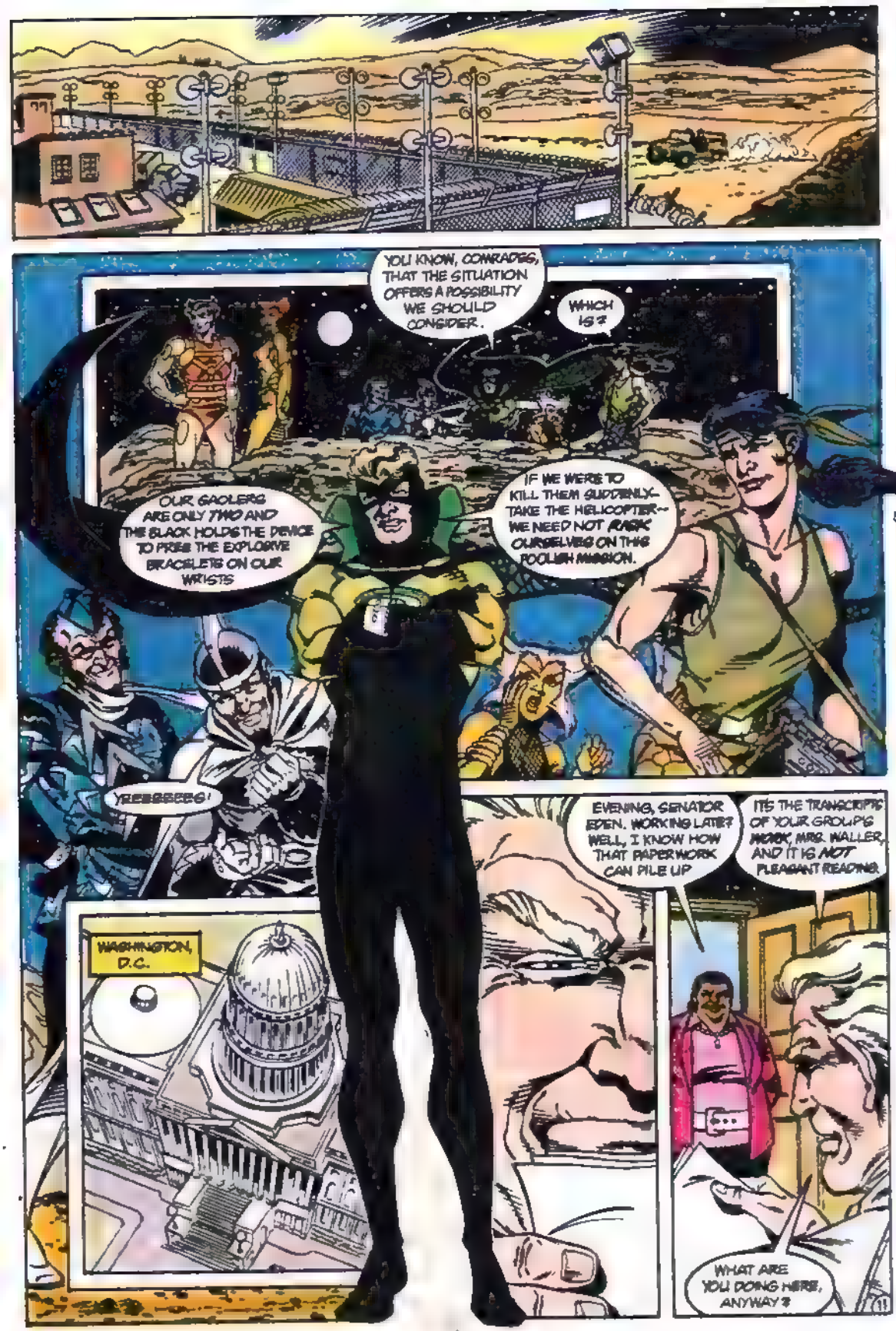
I JOINED THE CHURCH AND THE REVEREND FLINT TOOK A PERSONAL INTEREST IN MY SALVATION. WELL, ONE DAY, THE REVEREND AND I ARE PRAYING TOGETHER-- JUST US TWO?-- AND HE TRIES TO JUMP MY BONES.
I DIDN'T THINK THAT WAS RIGHT, HIM BEING MARRIED AND ALL, BUT THE REVEREND SAID HE'D ASKED HIS WIFE AND GOD AND THEY BOTH SAID IT WAS OKAY.

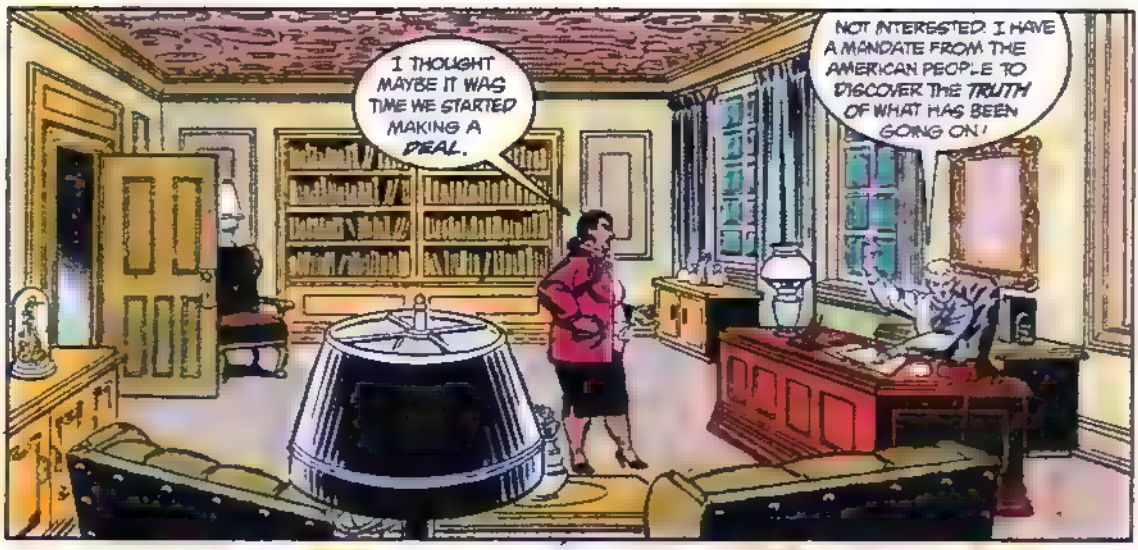
I FELT A LITTLE RUSHED AND I GOT SCARED AND I STARTED TO SCREAM. AND MY SONIC POWERS SORTA KICKED IN AND -- WELL, I SCREAMED HIS FACE OFF. KILLED HIM DEAD.
LORD, LORD, AIN'T THAT ALWAYS THE WAY?

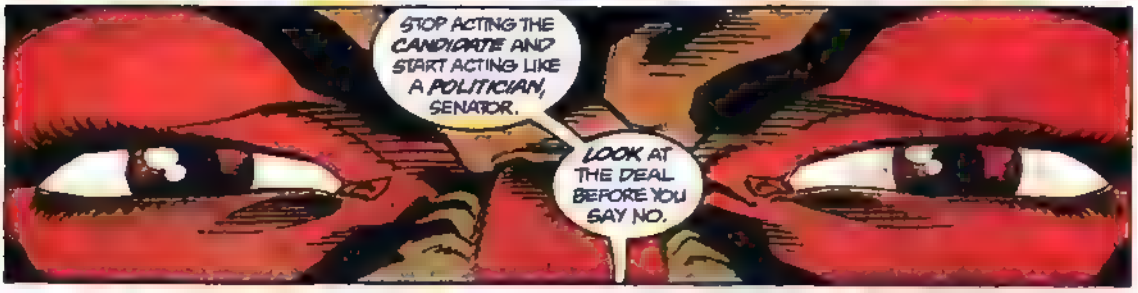
WELL, THEN, THE PO-LICE CAME AND I GOT HYSTERICAL AND WAS CRYING AND BEGGING THEM NOT TO SHOOT AND THAT I WAS SORRY AND BEFORE I KNEW WHAT WAS GOING ON I'D KILLED 32 STATE TROOPERS.
WELL, THEY TOOK ME OFF AND PUT ME IN JAIL AND EVERYTHING, BUT THE LORD HE'S LOOKING OUT FOR ME, AND HE PLACED ME WITH THE SQUAD FOR A CHANCE AT A NEW LIFE. PRAISE THE LORD!
PRAISE THE LORD!
0
50
100
200
WE'VE GOT AN OPENING.
NIGHTSHADE, FOLLOW ME. MARI, GET RAVAN AND MEET US DOWN IN THE ROAD.

YAAAAAH!
HAI!
EEEAAHH!
KRUMP!
SCRREEECH!!
ELEGANTLY DONE. BRAVO.
GLAD YOU APPROVE. TAKE THE DRIVER'S UNIFORM; I'LL TAKE THE OFFICER'S. NIGHTSHADE, YOU'LL GO WITH US IN YOUR SHADOW FORM.

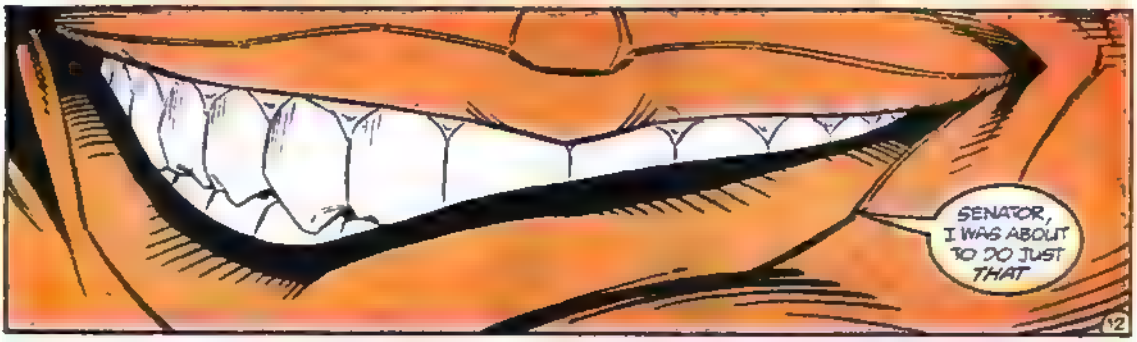
MARI, YOU STAY WITH SHADE. HE'S GOING TO HAVE HIS HANDS FULL CONTROLLING OUR DELINQUENTS.
WE'RE GOING TO FIND SISTER MARTINON AND THEN KILL THE LIGHTS. HAVE BRIGGOS HOME IN ON US AND PULL US OUT WITH SHEBA.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THE SOLDIERS YOU CAPTURED?
NOT TO WORRY I JUST SLIT THEIR THROATS
YOU DID WHAT?!
NOT TO WORRY. I DID NOT GET ANY ON THE UNIFORMS.
I KEEP FORGETTING WHY HE'S CALLED A THUG.


YOU KNOW, COMRADES, THAT THE SITUATION OFFERS A POSSIBILITY WE SHOULD CONSIDER.
WHICH IS?
OUR GAOLERS ARE ONLY TWO AND THE BLACK HOLDS THE DEVICE TO PRESS THE EXPLOSIVE BRACELETS ON OUR WRISTS
IF WE WERE TO KILL THEM SUDDENLY—TAKE THE HELICOPTER—WE NEED NOT RISK OURSELVES ON THIS FOOLISH MISSION.
YEEEEEEG!
WASHINGTON, D.C.
EVENING, SENATOR EDEN. WORKING LATE? WELL, I KNOW HOW THAT PAPERWORK CAN PILE UP
IT'S THE TRANSCRIPTS OF YOUR GROUP'S WORK, MRS. WALLER, AND IT IS NOT PLEASANT READING.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, ANYWAY?
11


I THOUGHT MAYBE IT WAS TIME WE STARTED MAKING A DEAL.
NOT INTERESTED. I HAVE A MANDATE FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO DISCOVER THE TRUTH OF WHAT HAS BEEN GOING ON!


STOP ACTING THE CANDIDATE AND START ACTING LIKE A POLITICIAN, SENATOR.
LOOK AT THE DEAL BEFORE YOU SAY NO.

OKAY, MRS. WALLER HIT ME WITH YOUR BEST SHOT.


SENATOR, I WAS ABOUT TO DO JUST THAT

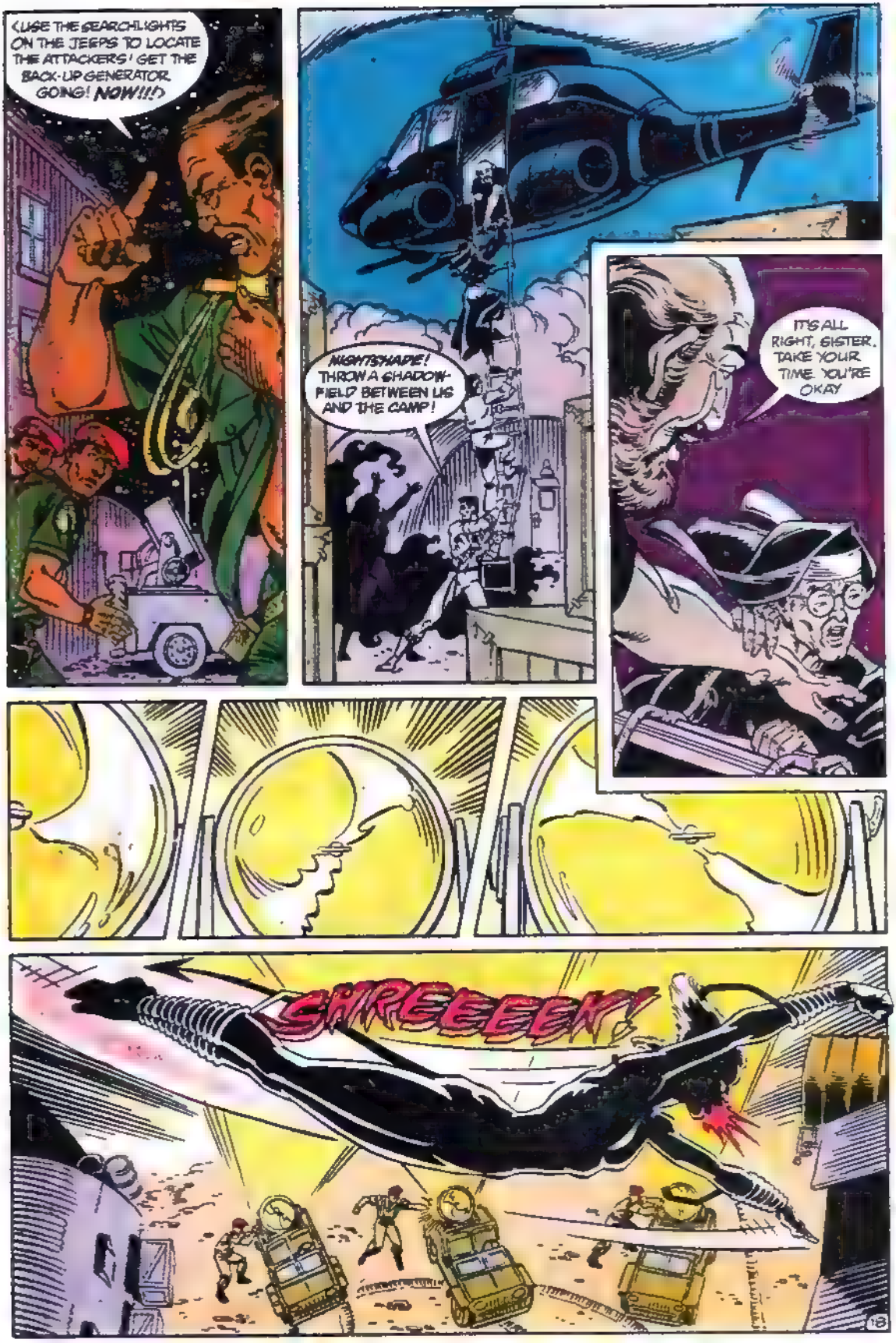
THEY'RE IN! THEY DROVE RIGHT PAST THE SENTRIES! THEY'RE OKAY!
FINE. NOW LOOK BEHIND YOU--SLOWLY. I HAVE A FEELING WE ARE NOT.
HI. WE TOOK A VOTE.
WE DECIDED WE DON'T FEEL LIKE PLAYING WITH YOUR LOT ANY MORE
WHUMP!
KRUNK!
WELL, THIS IS A FINE HOW-DEE-DO! I THOUGHT WE WERE ALL AGREED THAT WE WOULD KILL SHADE AND VIXEN AND GET OUT OF HERE! DIDN'T YOU THINK SO, PUMPKIN?
THAT WAS MY GENERAL IMPRESSION!
DON'T. DO. ANYTHING. RASH.
ME? NO NO NO NO! NOT NOW! NOT EVER! NOTHING! NO!
YOU START A MISSION, YOU FINISH A MISSION
ANY OF YOU SLUGS FOOL AROUND AGAIN ON THIS ONE--AND I'LL KILL YOU WE CLEAR?

OKAY, I GOT IT NOW LISTEN, THANKS...
SKIP IT.
I GOT MY OWN REASONS FOR WHAT I DID.
I FOUND HER, BEN. IN A CELL IN THE STOCKADE. NO ONE ELSE IS THERE BUT A FEW GUARDS.
OKAY WE LOCATED THE MAIN GENERATOR. THEY'RE BOUND TO HAVE A BACK-UP BUT WE DON'T KNOW WHERE
NIGHTSHADE, YOU GET THE NUN. WE'LL BLOW THE MAIN GENERATOR RENDEZVOUS BACK HERE AND HOPE SHEBA COMES BEFORE THEY PATCH IN THE ALTERNATE.
LET'S GO.

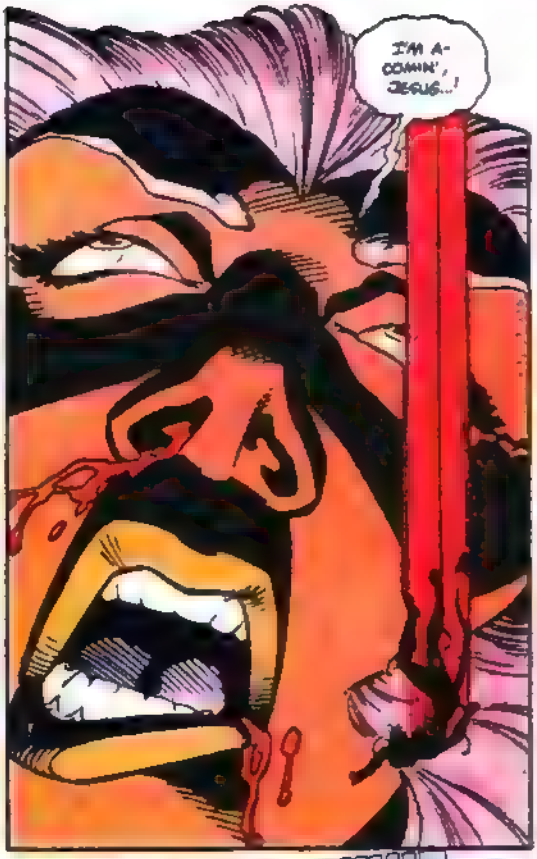
KRAK!
WHAM!
THUD!
BE NOT AFRAID!
WHAM!
FOR-- LO! -- I BRING YOU WORDS OF GREAT JOY
WE'RE HERE TO RESCUE YOU, SISTER. SHALL WE GO?
19

THAT'S IT! THEY'VE GOT HER! LET'S GO GO GO!
DEVIL TAKE THE HINDMOST! AND IF HE DOESN'T--I WILL!
SHWUP SHWUP
WEEEINNN
16

HWUP
HWUP
BRUDDA BRUDDA BRUDDA
SHREEEEK
EAT THIS, YA STINKIN' ABOS!
FWIP FWIP
FZAAK
YAPPAHHHG!
NO! NO!
BUDOOM BUDOOM


(USE THE SEARCHLIGHTS ON THE JEEPS TO LOCATE THE ATTACKERS! GET THE BACK-UP GENERATOR GOING! NOW!!!)
NIGHTSHADE! THROW A SHADOW-FIELD BETWEEN US AND THE CAMP!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, SISTER. TAKE YOUR TIME. YOU'RE OKAY
SHREEEEK!

BRAAAAP
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA


I'M A-COMIN', JESUS...!

WE'RE IN! GET US OUT AND SOUND RETREAT AND THEN TELL THE SS-1 TO MEET US AT THE RENDEZVOUS NOW!
SHEBA! HIGH AND HARD! PEEL!

YAAAAAH!
HWUP-HWUP
WEEEWAAA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA

FOLLOWING HER RESCUE BY THE CONTROVERSIAL SUICIDE SQUAD, SISTER AGNES MARTINON ANNOUNCED HER INTENTION TO REMAIN IN OGADEN TO CONTINUE HER MISSION TO THAT COUNTRY'S FAMINE-RAVAGED POPULATION.
GENERAL HAILE SELAISSE FRELIMO, THE LEADER OF SOCIALIST OGADEN, HAS SAID THAT SISTER MARTINON WAS IMPRISONED BY DISSIDENT ELEMENTS OF THE ARMY.
THE LEADER OF THOSE ELEMENTS--COLONEL JOSEPH T'KAKI--WAS KILLED BY SOLDIERS LOYAL TO THE REGIME WHEN HE TRIED TO ESCAPE.
AT HOME, SENATOR EDEN, HEAD OF THE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE INVESTIGATING THE SQUAD'S ACTIVITIES, HAS REVERSED HIS PREVIOUS STANDS AND IS NOW RECOMMENDING THE SQUAD BE MADE AN OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED AND SPONSORED AGENCY OF THE GOVERNMENT.
THE RESCUE OF SISTER MARTINON... COUPLED WITH THE TRAGIC DEATH OF ONE OF HER RESCUERS...HAS SHOWN THE VALUE OF THE PROGRAM.
WE CAN... WE WILL... WE MUST RECLAIM THE SOULS OF THE CRIMINALS IN OUR PRISONS. THE SUICIDE SQUAD HAS SHOWN US A WAY OF DOING IT.
NOTING THAT POLLS INDICATE THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WOULD SUPPORT A GOVERNMENT SPONSORED AGENCY, BUT THAT PERSONAL OPINION POLLS WERE RUNNING AGAINST HER, AMANDA WALLER HAS AGREED TO STEP DOWN AS HEAD OF THE EMBATTLED AGENCY.
THE NEW ADMINISTRATIVE HEAD OF THE SQUAD--AS PROPOSED BY SENATOR EDEN--IS J. DANFIELD KALE, DESCRIBED AS A MAN FROM THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY WITH IMPECCABLE CREDENTIALS AND BACKGROUND.
WITH SENATOR EDEN'S BACKING, THE MOTION TO SPONSOR THE SQUAD AND CONFIRMATION OF MR. KALE AS AGENCY HEAD IS EXPECTED TO BE APPROVED QUICKLY.

I DUNNO. JUST ISN'T GOING TO BE THE SAME WITH AMANDA GONE.
YEAH. MIGHT ACTUALLY BE CHEERY.
WONDER WHAT THE NEW GUYS LIKE?
WHY NOT LOOK IN THE OFFICE AND FIND OUT? THE NEW BOSS WANTED TO SEE THE TEAM AS SOON AS IT RETURNED.

YA WANTED TO SEE-- YAAII!
WELL, WELL... I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED...
HEL-LO, CHILDREN.

WHAT THE BLOODY HELL ARE YOU DOING SITTING THERE, WALL?! I THOUGHT THIS KALE BLOKE WAS THE NEW BOSS!

NEXT:

WHERE IS RICK FLAG?

SUICIDE NOTES

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L-3587

Dear Bob,

Personal files-type stories are required reading every few issues. There are just too many characters in this book to be able to develop them *and* go on a mission at the same time.

For a while there I thought someone had the upper hand on ol' Amanda. I feel like such a fool for even thinking it. That woman probably has something on the Pope.

It looks like both June and Rick have cracked up. This team is falling apart. I'm betting that when the Invasion starts, this team will get off their duffs and make a difference. It's already too late to make suggestions for it but an army of about 100 supervillains would be nice. It would be a good and believable way of killing off some of the dead wood villains that are running around. I have a feeling that if a crowd of people started cheering for Digger against the aliens, he would like it enough to become a good guy full time. Do we really want that to happen?

Bob Felber
60 Ruskin Avenue
Woonsocket, RI 02895

*****

Dear John, Luke, and the Gang,

It had to happen. The good Colonel has snapped his cap. It seems that when Karin died he lost his last connection to the old Squad, and he lost a kind of innocence that the old Squad possessed. The old Squad never had any doubts that what it was doing was the right thing, both for their country and the world. In the new Squad, the very premise has a kind of moral ambiguity that can drive a man as basically good as Flag to the brink of madness.

I don't think Flag is suicidal. He may be self-destructive in his need to atone for all the deaths that he feels himself responsible for; but if the Squad is Flag's last reason for living, he's going to an extreme to keep that reason alive. Where that will take him, I have no idea. If I've learned anything from the past twenty issues, it's that Ostrander delivers. The showdown between Flag and Deadshot has been brewing since that smile they gave each other in LEGENDS #2 and it ought to be good. If Flag has to die, there had better be a *real* good reason for it. Killing a sleaze like Tolliver does not rate execution.

Special thanks to Messers. McDonnell, Kesel and especially Gafford for a superb rendition of Nightshade, the new most beautiful woman in comics. Even out of uniform, she stole issue #21 for me.

Steven Spaulding
URH 469 Scott
202 E. Peabody
Champaign, IL 61820

*****

Dear Bob, John, etc.,

Well, it seems things have really hit the fan this time. Flag has gone off the deep end, June is crazy and, worst of all, somebody is hurling cream pies all over Belle Reve. This is serious stuff.

Seriously, though, issue #21 was interesting as a set-up for next issue. Now that Tolliver's dead, the Squad has only one thing to worry about: Cray. But Flag's gunning for him, and Deadshot will be gunning for Flag. Sounds like an interesting issue coming up.

What about the press release lying open on Tolliver's desk? Will whoever finds Tolliver find it and release it? Then what will the Squad do? I'm eager to find out.

Something has to be done about June Moone. When she was Enchantress, she had an interesting angle to her character. Now she's boring, and it looks like she's going to be psyched out for a while. Do her a favor and have her quit, or, heaven forbid, kill her. Or, you can make her interesting again. That would be your best bet. But do something.

I'm glad Nightshade was in a large part of this issue, as she is by far my favorite character in this book. Of course, her being shot will probably keep her out of the book for a little bit, but the situation that is unfolding is keeping me interested anyway. Still, I'll put in my request for more Nightshade, as she hasn't been featured prominently since issue #15.

Speaking of Nightshade's being shot, I'm glad to see more bloodshed in this book. Not that I love to see rivers of blood or anything, but this cast of characters is noted for violence, and there has been very little since Deadshot's leave of absence. So it was nice to see some.

I agree with Mr. Rose and Mr. Rughare. For a group that calls itself the Suicide Squad and takes suicidal missions, there has been very little death in the team. It's getting to be like *Star Trek* used to be: if there is a guest star, you have to wonder if he/she will die. But you don't have to worry about the regular cast. That will change next issue when Deadshot kills Flag (we can hope).

I can't say anything about the art except two words: realistic, gritty, and fabulous (okay, three words). Nightshade is as beautiful as ever. Everybody really benefits from Luke's work.

David Roy
Helser 2643 Elwood
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*****

Dear Bob,

With the pace slowed down and the sub-plots seething and boiling, humming to a deafening degree, the lid finally explodes off the cauldron with SUICIDE SQUAD #21. It appears everything we've longed for and been built up to is finally about to see fruition.

The core members are scattered and dissented, with Nightshade injured, Deadshot off on personal matters, and Flag over the edge. As their cover appears to finally be revealed, one wonders how the new administration will handle the effects. Will the government continue to sanction their activities, or will the team be turned loose?

A good story keeps readers guessing, and this is precisely what this book is doing. I'm pleased to see the Washington games and intrigue issues finally explored, and I continue to look forward to the next chapter.

Mark Lucas
66 Cleary Court #902
San Francisco, CA 94109

If you think we've been dancing around Washington, Mark, you ain't seen nothin' yet. In just two months we kick off something called THE JANUS DIRECTIVE. What is it? Heh, heh. Let's just say that it involves Checkmate, Suicide Squad, Project Peacemaker, The Atom Project, the CBI, and a few friends and foes. Oh yeah, it's all also eleven parts over eight weeks.

*****

Greetings Squaders,

SUICIDE SQUAD (along with FIRESTORM and *Grimjack*—a tip of the hat to John O.) continues to be one of the comics I most recommend to friends to read. After nearly two years, that's an item to be proud of. While comics like the JLI, birthed at about the same time as the Squad, after LEGENDS, have stagnated into cesspools of mediocrity and repetition, the Squad continues to introduce new characters, plotlines, and action, making it one of the most eclectic comics around.

SS #21 was no exception. John seems to have a knack for taking what are essentially "a day in the life" stories and turning them into something both enjoyable to read and significant to the plot of the ongoing stories. "Rogues" was fun. I really enjoy Waller's interactions with her family. I hope this angle to her character is continued. Interpersonal relations between Squad members are always enjoyable, especially ones involving Nightshade (one of my favorite characters), who seems to have a lot going on around her.

Speaking of Nightshade, two suggestions: first, since I suspect Flag is going to die next issue, I'd suggest Nightshade become mission leader. Despite her problems, she seems to have more of a handle on her life than anyone else in Belle Reve (except the Wall, of course). Second, since she's continuing her "relationship" with Captain Atom, maybe he should turn up once or twice in SS? I don't mean a crossover (I hate 'em), but a guest shot.

Boomerang continues to be funny—I'm amazed that the joke hasn't gotten old yet.

Regarding Duchess: she's a good character, and I hope she doesn't disappear when her storyline ends. Then again, having characters come and go isn't just a hallmark of this title, but a hallmark of John Ostrander. He absolutely refuses to let things get stale.

But enough praise to John; Luke McDonnell's art has definitely improved during his tenure on this title. I had had problems with his renditions of women's faces—they always looked forced—but all his characters have improved. He has the same wonderful feel for layout and movement. Geez, I don't know what else to say, except that Karl Kesel's the ideal inker for him and I sez "Welcome back!" (does this mean we get a Hawk & Dove guest shot?).

I don't suppose you could do a story set in New Orleans, and perhaps somewhere other than the French Quarter? I mean, there's Audubon Zoo (where *Cat People* was filmed), Tulane University, the riverfront, City Park, art galleries galore—there has to be *some* material for stories in there, and Belle Reve is right around the corner, supposedly. Can'tcha just see Nightshade and Bronze Tiger out shopping at Jax Brewery when something bad happens?

Michael Rawdon
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Yes, we're very glad to have Karl back but don't expect to see Hawk or Dove here any time soon. They're very busy readying themselves for a monthly series, written by Barbara and Karl Kesel, and coming this spring!

Whenever we get back to the Loc, I suspect we'll do more in New Orleans proper, so just wait patiently.

*****

Dear Editor,

"Rogues" was a typical SUICIDE SQUAD story. In other words, excellent. It's amazing how John can capture the individual personalities of the Squad and make us actually believe in them. John seems more at home here than in either FIRESTORM or MANHUNTER. He can mix characterization and action in a way that few writers can.

Part of this issue that stands out is Eve's attempt to help Rick and June's attempt to help herself. I hope you find some way to reactivate the Enchantress. She was one of my favorite members of the Squad. Perhaps June and Eve could somehow share the power of the Succubus. The pie in the face bit with Waller and Boomerang was hilarious. Since the Trickster and the Prankster are not in prison, I can't think of anyone who could have done it. I still can't believe that Rick actually killed Tolliver. He really must be losing it. I'm looking forward to his showdown with Deadshot, but I hope neither one dies. They are both interesting characters. I'm betting on Cray to be the one to die. If Rick does die, I hope you consider making Nemesis the new leader. He deserves it.

The art this issue was incredible. Thank you for bringing Karl back. He is in my opinion the best inker in comics. Perhaps you could even let Karl help write a couple of issues. His work on HAWK & DOVE was great.

Steve Bedard
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St. Catherine's, Ontario
Canada

Karl actually contributes ideas all the time, usually through lengthy letters John calls "Kesel epistles." In fact, the resolution to the cream pie stunt was dreamed up by Karl.

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Dear John, Bob, Luke, and Karl,

SUICIDE SQUAD #21 was really well done! I loved it. Waller taking on Derek was really satisfying. I liked watching him squirm after she had him "Checkmated." Just beautiful.

It was beautiful, that is, until that idiot Flag screwed everything up. He's really gone off the deep end this time. I can't wait to find out how it all turns out. Deadshot vs. Flag next issue will certainly be classic. All in all, a typically great issue.

And thank heaven Karl Kesel's back on the book. I've missed him.

I'd like to say a few things now about the Bonus Book. One thing I'd like to say is that I'm not sure who it is I write to express my opinion. But you guys will do fine, because, I assume, you have a say as to what the Bonus Book will eventually be.

Anyway, I thought it was great. Most of these books are usually played for laughs and when I came across this one I shuddered to think about what horribly unfunny things you'd put Bronze Tiger through. I was pleasantly surprised. The story was truly worthy of Ben's talents and the Suicide Squad name. Peter Krause is an artist to look for in the future, that's for sure. And Larry Ganem's story was exciting, action-packed, and just witty enough for Ben Turner to shine ... "I think my standing just dropped to number four." Just great.

Bill Gregg
Sharon, PA

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Let's see, this month we blew up Shrike, shown some treachery in the ranks, and resolved the Senate mess. We've lost Nightshade and Nemesis but gained a new leader for Task Force X (sort of). What can we do next month? How about resolving, once and for all, the Rick Flag mess? We'll look in on our cast and then cut to the Mid East and watch Rick complete a mission he feels should have been completed back in issue #2. It's going to be a dramatic event and a satisfying showdown between Flag and ... Rustam. See, we knew you wouldn't want to miss it.

Meantime, for those who already miss Luke after a mere issue, check out THE PHANTOM #1, on sale now. It's in the New Format, written by Mark Verheiden, and a great continuation of the same Phantom tradition we began in last year's mini-series. Look for it. Also in our New Format, starting last month, is THE DOOM PATROL, by the new creative team of Grant Morrison, Richard Case, and Scott Hanna. It's a very new DP and a very different book.

Until next time, drop me a line and keep smiling!

—Bob Greenberger